



Briefing Note: Free and Healthy School Lunches Programme Update

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	23 October 2019	Priority:	Medium
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1208555
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	Yes	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is to update you on progress on the Free and Healthy School Lunches Programme.

Note the progress to date as at 23 October 2019.

Agree that we will proactively announce the benefits of the programme and name participating schools in mid-November.

Agree / **Disagree**

Agree that this Briefing will not be proactively released at this time due to the commercial sensitivity of the information.

Agree / **Disagree**



Damian Edwards
Associate Deputy Secretary
Education System Investment

23/10/2019



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

29/10/19

Programme Update

Status of School Uptake of Programme

1. Of the 61 invited schools in Bay of Plenty / Waiariki and Hawkes Bay / Tairāwhiti and Otago / Southland, 60 have indicated that they would like to join the programme. [REDACTED] s 9(2)(f)(iv) is the only school that has indicated that they do not wish to join the programme at this time. Schools will confirm their participation on 25 October 2019.

Discussions with Schools

2. We met with 29 of the 43 invited schools in Rotorua and Napier last week. A third meeting is being planned in Gisborne and Wairoa next week. During the discussions we have provided clarification on questions on the programme including funding allocations and the procurement process. We have also received feedback on school progress to date. Key discussion points are as follows:
 - a. We have confirmed with schools that the budget is based on an average of \$5 per head:
 - i This includes food and all operational and administrative costs for making and delivering lunches. E.g. distributing food to children and waste management.
 - ii It excludes funding for year 9-13 students, however schools are able to stretch their budgets, provided years 1-8 students are still fed, and nutrition and portion sizes are not compromised.
 - iii There is a separate budget for minor capital items required for food storage or heating that will be discussed with schools based on what is needed once menu items are known.
 - iv [REDACTED] s 9(2)(f)(iv)
 - v Schools have been requested to keep the funding amounts confidential to encourage suppliers to provide the best commercial price they can.
 - b. We are running two parallel tender processes, a closed tender for Tranche 1 and an open tender process for tranches 2, 3 and 4.
 - i The closed tender process is being run in the Bay of Plenty / Waiariki and Hawkes Bay / Tairāwhiti. This process will fast track negotiations and allow us to work closely with suppliers and schools to refine and adapt our implementation approach. All 43 schools initially invited are able to opt into this tender approach with support from us.
 - ii Schools who have identified potential suppliers will be provided with day to day support and procurement advice. The 15 early suppliers who contacted us expressing an interest in the programme were initially told there would be one open tender process. We are giving them all a courtesy phone call this week to explain the revised process. We will also forward their details to schools to consider.

- iii The open tender process through the Government Electronic Tendering System (GETS) is also underway for tranche 2 in Otago / Southland. We will establish regional panels of potential providers, from which schools can choose an appropriate lunch provider. This approach is intended to minimise contracting and other risks (e.g. food safety) to schools by being actively managed by the Ministry. This tender will be extended for Tranches 3 and 4 as we roll these out later in 2020.
- c. We are in the process of finalising the Evaluation framework that includes two cycles of evaluation.
 - iv First, an evaluation of the implementation will enable learning for the prototype, testing the cost-effectiveness and efficacy of the model as it is being delivered. Second, an evaluation of outcomes will provide evidence for accountability scope.
 - v Schools are supportive of this approach and have confirmed that they are willing to participate in data collection and reviews.

Challenges

- 3. Implementation opportunities and challenges are being identified as we work through the finer details of what needs to be done. Our continued open dialogue with schools will allow us to learn, adapt and refine our models as we deliver Tranche 1. The key challenges we have identified are:
 - a. Timeframes are tight and while we are making every effort to meet the target of Term 1, Day 1 implementation, this may be challenging in most cases. We will have clarity on this in early November when we have spent more time with schools supporting their planning. We note that the December/January shut-down requires outsourced arrangements to be in place by 13 December. Timeframe challenges include:
 - i Suppliers looking to service multiple schools need time to set-up and/or expand their operations. New infrastructure will likely need to be built (e.g. kitchen facilities) and staff hired and trained. Required processes such as resource consenting may jeopardise timeframes.
 - ii In rural regions there are typically limited local provider options. Some schools in these areas would like the opportunity to establish organisations in their community to provide job opportunities for their whanau. Again, this will take time.
 - iii We are providing on the support for schools and also recruiting additional staff to add to the resource pool.
 - b. Some schools would prefer to make lunches themselves and have been doing so, but do not have adequate kitchen facilities to operate at scale. We have been clear that we do not have capital for major infrastructure upgrades, however some schools would like the opportunity to consider this further as part of their 5 year property plans. We have connected these schools with their Ministry property advisor.

c. s 9(2)(a)

Announcement Advice

4. We recommend that there is a proactive media release that emphasises the well-being benefits of the programme and names all the participating schools.
- a. Schools are positive about being involved in the programme and the benefits to their students and communities. Some schools are embracing the opportunity to be involved and would also be happy to speak with local media on the benefits of this initiative. The majority are comfortable being identified and dealing with the likely increase in attention and direct media enquiries.
 - b. One school has said they would prefer not to be named. However, being involved in the programme requires contacting potential food suppliers, parents and communities, so word of their involvement will get out. Consequently, the chances of local media identifying any school wanting anonymity is high.
 - c. We also do not think it is feasible to withhold the names of all the schools when we make an announcement. Media will simply ring around all the schools in the programme regions to find whether they are in or out.
 - d. We suggest that in the lead up to any announcement we:
 - iv encourage all participating schools to be named
 - v work with any school in this situation to fully explain why is likely to happen given their participation and the reasons why it is best to 'front foot' their involvement from the start
 - vi provide all participating schools with tips on media management
 - vii make one of our media staff available as a contact point for any questions that might arise.
 - e. The alternative is that if any school insists on not being named, we state that there are number of additional schools involved who do not wish to be identified. This is not our preference. Local media will still try to identify these schools. However, the number of those not wanting to be identified will be small and is unlikely to detract from any announcement.
5. We recommend that the timing of this release is mid-November, no sooner than the week commencing 18 November. This will ensure we have validated implementation dates with schools and provided schools media support. This timing will also ensure media focus on the Rugby World Cup is complete.

Proactive Release

6. We recommend that this Briefing is not released at this time due to the commercial sensitivity of the information.